

220 Court Square (House)  
Charlottesville  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1199

HABS  
VA,  
2-CHAR,  
5-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

220 COURT SQUARE (HOUSE)

HABS No. VA-1199

Location: Northeast 6th Street, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Present Owner: The Albemarle County Historical Society.

Present Use: Library/Museum.

Present Condition: Excellent.

Significance: Court Square, in the early nineteenth century was a small courthouse community comprised of two-story townhouses, taverns, storehouses and offices. The area has retained much of the original flavor through the surviving architecture of the period. No. 220 Court Square is one of the important buildings that supports this historical feeling. Built sometime before the Civil War, the front facade is of Flemish bond with five course American bonding on all other walls. It is a hall-parlour house with decorative details being the brick cornice, projecting modillions and stepped gable roof. Over the years No. 220 has been used for offices by prominent lawyers and businessmen.

Chain of Title

The following is the chain of title to the property of No. 220 Court Square located on North East Sixth Street and included in the Charlottesville Historic District. Records are found at the Albemarle County Courthouse and First City Courthouse, Charlottesville, Virginia. Deed references are listed as ACDB: Albemarle County Deed Book and DB: Charlottesville Deed Book, both immediately followed by the volume number and page.

About 1800, John Jouett, a prominent land owner conveyed a lot north and east of the original town to two land developers John T. Hawkins and Thomas W. Lewis. (The original deed was lost and was replaced with one dated August 24, 1804.) ACDB 15-38.

In 1803, Hawkins and Lewis conveyed to John Yeargain (also spelled Yurgain ), for \$1,000 cash, "the lot, messuage and tenement on the east side of the Square." ACDB 14-213. References are made to "old" and "new" parts of the dwelling. Yeargain, a saddlemaker and whiskey salesman, lived here until he died in 1837. (See Appendix A).

In 1840, Richard Matthews and James Lobban acquired the site. References are made to a frame tenement structure on the property. Lobban released his interest in 1841. Matthews was also the owner of No.s 222-224 Court Square, the property adjoining to the north.

In 1847, following the death of Richard Matthews the property was involved in a lengthy chancery suit among his heirs, lasting 37 years. ACDB 79-515. In a deed dated February 7, 1884 the property was conveyed by the Matthew heirs: H.A. Matthews, O.B. Matthews, R. Matthews, J.D. Matthews, James W. Matthews, and M.M. Jameson to M.M. Blair. ACDB 86,287. The property was described as containing a "brick building of two office rooms."

On October 11, 1888, the title was trasfered from M.M. Blair to Charles B. Harris, trustee. DB 1-196.

On December 31, 1900, the same property was conveyed to Thomas S. Martin, U.S. Senator from Virginia. DB 11-249. The property was "modified by a deed of exchange between Martin and E.L. Bailey, dated November 18, 1911." DB 23-23. Bailey, then owner of no. 224, with Martin made reciprocal conveyances to give Bailey the southern five feet of the alley between no. 220 and the Michie Co. property, and to give Martin an additional 12 foot depth to his lot. (Later a plat by O.R. Randolph, engineer, dated 14 July 1961 showed the adjusted Bailey/Martin property lines. DB 268-250. (see appendix B)

On March 3, 1923 Lemuel F. Smith, Judge of Circuit Court of Albemarle County and later a Justice of Virginia's Supreme Court of Appeals, and William Fife Long, lawyer, acquired the title jointly. DB 43-208.

Smith and wife, Grace S., conveyed the other undivided half interest to Long on January 15, 1927. DB 55-402.

William Fife Long died testate on March 11, 1967, and by his will dated January 12, 1961, and probated March 23, 1967, he gave the property to his daughter Frances Long Hodges. WB 11-490.

The Albemarle County Historical Society received title to no. 220 from Frances Long Hodges and Bernard Hodges, her husband, for \$9,000 on October 2, 1967. DB-292-337. The Albemarle County Historical Society is the present owner of the property.

Although originally built as a private residence, over the years No. 220 has been used for offices by many prominent lawyers and businessmen. Chronologically, the following people have maintained offices at No. 220 Court Square:

S. Valentine Southall, lawyer; R. F. Mason, real estate broker; Judge Wm. J. Robertson, lawyer, Justice of Virginia's Supreme Court of Appeals, and first president of the Virginia Bar Association; Thomas S. Martin, lawyer and U. S. Senator; John S. White, lawyer and Charlottesville postmaster; William F. Long, lawyer; R. Watson Sadler, lawyer and Judge of Charlottesville Corporation Court; Anne Irving Cox, lawyer; Col. Henry B. Goodloe, lawyer; Bernard P. Chamberlain, lawyer; Ellen V. Nash, lawyer; and Charles A. Dwyer, real estate broker.

Architectural Documentation

The identity of the builder of No. 220 Court Square is unknown. The earlier "frame tenement" structure on the site was replaced with the present brick structure sometime between 1840 and 1884. Due to a chancery suit among the Matthews heirs during this time, records are unclear and an exact date for the brick building is unknown.

Stylistic and physical evidence indicate that the house was built sometime before the Civil War. The front facade of the building is of Flemish bond while the other outside walls are of a varying five course American bond. The use of wide blade circular-sawn beams also encourages this dating. Some aspects of the frame tenement were probably incorporated into the later brick building; examples being the use of pit-sawn beams in the cellar and older hardware including door locks and hinges. No. 220 shares a common wall with no. 222 and 224 Court Square, abutting to the north. This brick building was also owned by Richard Matthews and predates No. 220.

### Exterior Description

**Overall Dimensions:** The lot is number 220 Court Square is located on the east side of north east Sixth street on Court Square. It extends 38.73 feet in length and 49.73 feet in depth. The house measures 33'- 11" along the north-south axis and 29'-10" along the east-west axis.

**Foundations:** The foundation is brick in the original portion of the house and concrete on the later addition.

**Exterior Materials:** The exterior walls are of red brick. The front facade is laid in Flemish bond articulated at the corners by the use of queens closers. The side facades are a varying five course American bond. The twentieth century addition on the back is of common running bond. Walls of the original structure are 14" thick while the later walls are 9" in thickness. The original brickwork was poorly repointed in 1967.

**Porches:** From the various patterned brick sidewalk there are three steps up onto the front porch or stoop, giving access to the two front doors. This 1967 addition effectively repeats the brick patterns used in the interior fireplaces. Included in the design were steps down to the cellar door and a simple decorative iron railing.

**Chimney:** The house has two interior brick chimneys located on the north walls. The central extends above the height of the stepped gable and the end chimney cuts into the south exterior wall of No. 224 to use its chimney.

**Doorways and Doors:** The doors on the first floor are four-panelled greek revival style. The two front entrances have four-paned transom lights and wooden thresholds.

**Windows and Shutters:** Windows on the first floor are primarily of one style, six over nine, and double hung. Windows in the later addition follow this description as well. Of the two windows in the cellar rooms, one is a single sash casement window (in the south room) and a single sash six-pane window (in the north room). All of the first floor windows are flanked by rectangular wooden shutters with twenty slats between each rail. (The twentieth century addition to the rear does not have shutters.)

**Roof:** The medium pitch slate gable roof has a slope of thirty degrees. It is flanked to the south by an outstanding stepped gable parapet. Each 'step' is crowned with a row of bricks set back a few inches which articulates the top edge of the building. Another distinguishing feature is the modillioned cornice on the east and west facades (front and back). Roofing on the twentieth century addition is asphalt.

### Interior Description

**Floor Plans:** The house is a simple hall-parlour plan with a third room added to the rear in the mid-twentieth century. All entrances are on the west side of the house and enter directly into the rooms. The cellar and first floor plans are almost identical.

**Stairway:** One flight of very narrow stairs connects the cellar to the first floor. (These were redesigned in 1967.) There are ten steps with a vertical spindle handrail.

**Flooring:** The original flooring is of pine and has varying dimensions from 4 1/2 " to 5 1/2 " in width. The later twentieth century portions have narrow floor boards of approximately 2 1/2 ". The cellar floors are of brown tile.

**Walls and Ceiling:** The walls on the first floor are plastered while in the cellar the brick is exposed and only whitewashed. Two openings have been bricked closed on the cellar walls: there is a row lock arch on the north wall (north room) with a metal lintel, and there is evidence of a front window with a wooden lintel on the west wall (north room). On the first floor, the ceiling is of plaster, there are baseboards in all rooms on the first floor. In the original portion of the building there is a picture cornice molding on all walls.

**Doorways and doors:** The interior doors on the first floor are also four-panelled greek revival style. There is a ten inch wooden threshold in the entrance between the two rooms. A five-panelled regency door gives access to the north room in the cellar. This entrance way has a large stone threshold.

**Interior trim:** The doorways and windows on the first floor are surrounded by heavy molding characteristic of the nineteenth century. The fireplace mantles on the first floor are simple and have a bevelled edge. The cellar is almost void such detail. The most outstanding feature of

the cellar area is the ceiling comprised of both pit-sawn and circular-sawn beams.

Project Information

This documentation was undertaken by the School of Architecture of the University of Virginia, under the direction of K. Edward Lay, Professor of Architecture. The study was prepared by Katherine Kilmer Mahood, Graduate Student in Architectural History, during the Fall Semester, 1982. The material was donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey. It was not prepared under HABS supervision, nor edited by members of the HABS staff.